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RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0597  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 7032  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 7091  
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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; December 10, 2009

TOP HEADLINES

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Chosun Ilbo  
College Entrance Math Test Likely to Become Easier;  
Education Authorities See Difficult Math Tests  
as Encouraging Private Education

JoongAng Ilbo, Seoul Shinmun  
Taliban Warns against ROK's Troop Deployment

Dong-a Ilbo  
50 Years of U.S.-Japan Alliance Cooling; U.S. Puts off Meetings on  
Broader Ties, with Japan Halting Talks  
on U.S. Base Relocation

Hankook Ilbo  
Study: Private Education Has Little Impact  
on College Entrance Exam Scores

Hankyoreh Shinmun  
Top MBC Executives Tender Resignations; Suspicion that Lee Myung-bak  
Administration May Be Aiming to Control MBC to "Establish  
Pro-Government Broadcasting System"

Segye Ilbo  
College Entrance Test Score Gap Widens Between High Schools

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

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The Taliban, in a Dec.9 statement e-mailed to international media,  
warned the ROK against its plan to send troops to Afghanistan,  
saying that Seoul must prepare for "bad consequences" if the troops  
are deployed as scheduled. (All)

North Korea yesterday acknowledged the domestic outbreak of the H1N1  
flu for the first time, saying that nine people were infected with  
the virus. The ROKG will send a message to the North as early as  
today to offer antiviral drugs and request information on the  
situation. (All)

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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Stephen Bosworth, the U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy, seems to have met with the North's First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok-ju yesterday to discuss the North Korean nuclear issue. (Chosun, JoongAng, Segye, all TVs)

Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Philip Crowley said in a regular briefing: "We expect that they (Ambassador Stephen Bosworth and the interagency team) probably did have meetings in Pyongyang after they arrived. ... I would say that the primary meetings that we expect on this visit will occur tomorrow (Dec. 9)." (Chosun)

## MEDIA ANALYSIS

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### -North Korea: Ambassador Bosworth's Visit

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Most ROK media speculated that Stephen Bosworth, the U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy, may have met with the North's First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok-ju yesterday to discuss the North Korean nuclear issue. As support for this speculation, most media quoted Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Philip

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Crowley as saying in a Dec. 8 regular briefing: "We expect that they (Ambassador Stephen Bosworth and the interagency team) probably did have meetings in Pyongyang after they arrived. ... I would say that the primary meetings that we expect on this visit will occur tomorrow (Dec. 9).

Most media also noted the North Korean media's silence about Ambassador Bosworth's visit, in sharp contrast to their almost, real-time reporting on former President Bill Clinton's visit in August. In a related development, a senior U.S. official was quoted as saying: "Bosworth and his delegation went into the dark side of the moon." Conservative Dong-a Ilbo, meanwhile, quoted an ROKG official as viewing the situation positively, saying: "The fact that the North Korean media has refrained from reporting (on Ambassador Bosworth's visit) can be seen as a signal that North Korea is taking a prudent approach to talks with the U.S."

### -Copenhagen Climate Change Conference

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Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo editorialized: "It is fortunate that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a plan to regulate emissions of six greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, on Dec. 7. This is because, with this announcement, the USG has demonstrated to the world its determination to curb greenhouse gas emissions, circumventing a Congress which has been a major hindrance to such a move. This U.S. move must be good news for the Copenhagen (Climate Change) Conference because it remains uncertain whether the Conference can produce an agreement on emission reduction targets due to differences between developed and developing countries. ... In order to elicit cooperation from developing countries, developed countries, which are mostly responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, should act first. ... We also urge the U.S. Congress to change its attitude."

### -U.S.-Japan Relations

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Most newspapers carried reports saying that U.S.-Japan relations are cooling sharply due to the discord over the relocation of the Futenma U.S. military base.

Newspapers carried the following headlines: "'If Japan Breaches Bilateral Accord...' U.S. Signals Intention to Reject Bilateral Summit with Japan Slated for Next Week in Copenhagen" (right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo); and "50 Years of U.S.-Japan Alliance Cooling; U.S. Puts off Meetings on Broader Ties, with Japan Halting Talks on U.S. Base Relocation" (conservative Dong-a Ilbo)

CONFLICT OVER FUTENMA BASE COULD AFFECT OPCON TRANSFER  
(Dong-a Ilbo, December 10, 2009, Page 3; Excerpts)

By Yoon Duk-min, Professor at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and Security

If Futenma Air Base is relocated to Guam as the Hatoyama Administration wishes, it could have a serious impact on the safety of the ROK. It means that in the event of an emergency on the Korean Peninsula, U.S. Marines cannot be swiftly sent to the Peninsula. Given the distance between Guam and the Korean Peninsula, U.S. Marines in Guam will have difficulty carrying out the readiness force missions that Marines at Okinawa do. Furthermore, in light of the strategic value of the U.S. military base at Okinawa, which is located midway between the ROK, China, and Japan, downsizing or relocating the base will have a significant effect on the ROK-U.S. alliance and the USFK realignment. It will also create an environment where we have to review or adjust the size and role of USFK, the transfer of wartime operational control, and the direction of the ROK-U.S. alliance.

When it comes to the issue of moving Futenma Base out of Okinawa, the ROK is a concerned party. For the sake of our safety, we should

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determine what the Japanese government is planning to do and whether there is any alternative to the relocation plan.

WE WELCOME U.S.'S DECISION TO REGULATE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS  
(JoongAng Ilbo, December 9, Page 34)

The U.S. consumes over 25 percent of the world's energy and the U.S. per capita carbon dioxide emissions are nearly five times the worldwide per capita figure. However, the U.S. did not commit itself to meeting obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The U.S. withdrew its support for the Kyoto Protocol, which 38 developed countries signed to prevent global warming. The Kyoto Protocol calls for developed countries to reduce their emissions by an average of 5.2 percent below 1990 levels by 2012. The U.S. said that international cooperation is meaningless without participation by China, which has overtaken the U.S. as the world's biggest carbon dioxide emitter. China also passed the buck to the U.S. The U.S. and China, as the world's biggest carbon dioxide emitters, pointed fingers at each other, dealing a blow to global discussions on greenhouse gas emissions.

But with signs of global warming becoming noticeable, the international community felt a heightened sense of crisis. This is why ahead of the Copenhagen Conference aimed at devising a new framework for curbing greenhouse gas emissions, countries have set emission reduction targets voluntarily. The European Union (EU) has committed to cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by 2020 and Japan has announced the goal of cutting emissions 25 percent by 2020. Even though not obligated under the Kyoto Protocol, China and India have taken positive steps, pledging to slow the growth of their carbon emissions. The ROK also promised to cut greenhouse gas emissions at the highest level recommended for emerging economies by the United Nations (UN). However, the U.S. has proposed a mere 3 percent reduction below 1990 levels, which falls far short of the targets set by other developed countries. Moreover, a related bill is bogged down in the Senate. Therefore, this is somewhat embarrassing for the Obama Administration, which vowed to actively participate in the Climate Change Convention unlike the George W. Bush Administration.

It is fortunate that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a plan to regulate emissions of six greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, on Dec. 7. This is because, with this announcement, the USG has demonstrated to the world its determination to curb greenhouse gas emissions, circumventing a

Congress which has been a major hindrance to such a move. This U.S. move must be good news for the Copenhagen (Climate Change) Conference because it remains uncertain whether the Conference can produce an agreement on emission reduction targets due to differences between developed and developing countries. As indicated in a joint editorial by 56 newspapers from around the world, including JoongAng Ilbo, in order to elicit cooperation from developing countries, developed countries, which are mostly responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, should act first. Sticking to only one's own interests will lead to collective destruction. We also urge the U.S. Congress to change its attitude.

## FEATURES

### JCS CHAIR RECONFIRMS US PLEDGE TO MAINTAIN CURRENT TROOP LEVELS IN ROK

(Yonhap News, December 8, 2009)

The United States Tuesday reaffirmed its pledge to maintain the current level of its troops in the ROK, dispelling media speculation that some U.S. forces might redeploy to Afghanistan.

"We are very committed to 28,500 troops' presence in the ROK. That's strongly reaffirmed by President Obama, both publicly as well as his meetings with President Lee Myung-bak," said Adm. Michael

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Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in a news conference here.

Mullen's statement came amid controversy over remarks Obama made to American soldiers in Seoul last month. "The story of your service goes beyond this peninsula," Obama said. "Others among you served in Afghanistan. Others among you will deploy yet again."

Mullen himself said in October that discussions are underway about rotating U.S. troops in the ROK.

ROK officials have said the remarks by Obama and Mullen should not be taken as a (hint at a) possible troop reduction in Korea, but rather a routine rotation of troops without reducing the number. They added they have never discussed a troop reduction with the U.S.

Mullen, however, said the Obama Administration will follow up on the strategic flexibility measures drawn up by the Bush Administration for rapid deployment of U.S. troops abroad to conflict regions.

"The idea of strategic flexibility is one we are addressing with the ROK leadership," he said. "We think it is very important, part of a strategic concept for security both for the region and globally."

Faced with tough resistance from Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan, Obama last week announced plans to send 30,000 more troops to the war-ravaged central Asian state early next year to bring the number of U.S. troops there to more than 100,000.

The ROK has said it will send a 140-strong Provincial Reconstruction Team to Afghanistan next year, accompanied by about 320 troops for their protection.

More than 30,000 multinational forces are already operating in Afghanistan in support of the U.S. effort against Al Qaida and Taliban insurgents. NATO says it will soon send another 7,000 troops.

The ROK withdrew more than 200 military medics and engineers from Afghanistan in 2007 after 23 ROK Christian missionaries were held captive. Two of them were killed and the rest released after the Seoul government pledged to withdraw the troops by the end of that year.

ROK Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan recently said that increased aid

to Afghanistan by the ROK is linked to the stable deployment of 28,500 U.S. troops in the Korean Peninsula, a legacy of the 1950-53 Korean War.

(WASHINGTON) COLLECTING OPINIONS FROM U.S. CAR INDUSTRY REGARDING KORUS FTA  
(Maeil Business Newspaper, December 10, 2009, Page 6)

By Reporters Jung Wook and Lee Chung-woo

Assistant USTR Wendy Cutler  
(U.S.) Willing to Talk Anytime If ROK Requests Additional Discussions

"The U.S. is ready to listen anytime to ROK suggestions regarding the KORUS FTA."

Assistant USTR Wendy Cutler, who was in charge of FTA negotiations with the ROK, has said that if the ROK makes additional demands regarding the KORUS FTA, (the U.S.) is ready to discuss them at any time. This remark was made during a Dec. 8 interview in Seoul with this paper's Economic Affairs Editor Yoon Kyung-ho, apparently out of consideration of the deteriorating ROK public opinion following last month's ROK-U.S. summit regarding additional discussions on automobiles. Seemingly conscious of controversies in the ROK regarding possible "renegotiations" (on the automobile sector), Assistant USTR Cutler said that (the U.S.) has "never once used the

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word, renegotiation," adding: "The U.S. has intended to "re-engage in dialogue on pending issues raised."

Regarding additional U.S. demands on the automobile issue, she stated that (Washington) has recently listened to public opinions through the Federal Register, adding: "(We) have received about 300 opinions from various sectors and are closely reviewing them."

Assistant USTR Cutler said that the U.S. Congress has many bills to address, adding that the (USTR) was (working with members) of Congress on issues so that (they could) gain Congressional approval in the future ratification process. This means that under the current circumstances, conditions are not ripe for discussing the ROK-U.S. FTA in the U.S. Congress, and therefore, it seems like it will take some time until ratification of the trade pact. Regarding her meetings with Trade Minister Kim Jong-hoon and Chief FTA Negotiator Lee Hye-min, she only noted, "I briefed them on the U.S. situation following the summit and proposed leading dialogue in a constructive manner, if it resumes in the future." However, mindful of concerns expressed by the ROK, Assistant USTR Cutler said that the number of (U.S.) autos exported (to the ROK) should be determined by considering the differences in size between ROK and U.S. markets. This indicates that she is not making an issue of the number of U.S. cars imported by the ROK. Cutler added that the U.S.'s position is that (the ROK) should take steps to ensure U.S. companies from important industries compete fairly.

Assistant USTR Cutler said that not only U.S. industries but also the USTR is reviewing what impact the ROK-EU FTA will have when it takes effect early next year.

STEPHENS